

REMARKS

Status of the Claims

Claims 6-10, 17 and 19 are now present in this application. Claim 6 is independent.

By this Amendment, claim 18 is canceled, and claims 6 and 17 are amended.

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

Claim Objections

The Examiner has objected to claims 6-10, 17 and 18 because of several informalities. These claim objections are respectfully traversed. Claim 18 has been canceled, thereby mooting the objection to claim 18.

In order to overcome the objections, Applicants have amended claims 6 and 17 by correcting the deficiencies pointed out by the Examiner.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of these objections are respectfully requested.

Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claim 18 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Nakata et al., GB 2,288,126 A. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

A complete discussion of the Examiner's rejection is set forth in the Office Action, and is not being repeated here.

While not conceding the appropriateness of the Examiner's rejection, but merely to advance prosecution of the instant application, Applicants respectfully submit that claim 18 has been cancelled, thus rendering this rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103 moot. Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection are respectfully requested.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner indicates that claims 6-10 and 19 would be allowable if rewritten or amended to overcome the aforementioned claim objections. Applicants thank the Examiner for the early indication of allowable subject matter in this application. Claim 6 has been amended as set forth above in order to overcome the aforementioned objections.

With respect to claim 17, this claim has been amended to recite that the upper surface of the second members is harder than the lower surface, thereby further limiting what is recited in claim 6. Support for this Amendment is found in the Application as originally filed including, for example, page 8, lines 21-27, where the disclosed first surface corresponds to the claimed upper surface and the disclosed second surface corresponds to the claimed lower surface.

Reconsideration and allowance of claims 6-10 and 17 are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

All of the stated grounds of rejection have been properly traversed, accommodated, or rendered moot. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider all presently outstanding rejections and that they be withdrawn. It is believed that a full and complete response has been made to the outstanding Office Action, and as such, the present application is in condition for allowance.

In view of the above amendment, Applicant believes the pending application is in condition for allowance.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Robert J. Webster, Registration No. 46472, at the telephone number of the undersigned below to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Director is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge any fees required during the pendency of the above-identified application or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448.

Dated: May 4, 2011

Respectfully submitted,

By 

Paul C. Lewis

Registration No.: 43368

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

8110 Gatehouse Road, Suite 100 East

P.O. Box 747

Falls Church, VA 22040-0747

703-205-8000